

May 16, 2006

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Funding Allocation for Fire Safe Councils

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We are writing to request that a funding allocation be included in the 2006-07 budget for the California Fire Safe Council and the network of more than 130 community-based Fire Safe Councils operating throughout our great state. The signatories to this letter support the inclusion of \$26 million in the budget for these purposes. The need for such a funding source was verified by your Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, which urged federal, state, and local policymakers to implement a stable funding infrastructure for the California Fire Alliance and Fire Safe Councils.

The California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) was founded in 1993, and has helped form community-based fire safe councils composed of local and state fire fighting organizations, concerned citizens, businesses, and local government officials who work to provide their communities with critical fire prevention, fire risk reduction, and fire education programs. The CFSC and local Councils work to prevent the potentially devastating effects of the 5,000-plus wildfires that burn in California each year by helping Californians get prepared before wildfire strikes.

The CFSC maintains and operates a statewide community fire hazard mitigation and prevention grants clearinghouse, which awards grants on a competitive and matching basis for hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire safety planning, and community education programs. At present, the grants distributed by the clearinghouse are supported by federal funding secured annually through the National Fire Plan. The CFSC currently receives no state funding, despite the vital role the CFSC plays in community-based fire prevention and loss mitigation throughout California.

The strategic infusion of state funds will allow the CFSC to meet the demands of local fire safe councils and the acute need to protect homes and communities from the potentially devastating effects of wildfire as demand for project grant funding is outstripping funding available to the CFSC. Moreover, a state commitment to help fund

the CFSC will greatly strengthen the efforts of the CFSC to secure ongoing federal funding.

It is imperative that the CFSC and local Councils continue their role in the prevention of wildfires by implementing and maintaining preparedness and loss mitigation programs in every county. The funding we are requesting be included in the 2006-07 budget will help California communities achieve effective wildfire preparedness.

Sincerely,

JOHN J. BENOIT
Assemblyman, 64th District

JUAN ARAMBULA
Assemblyman, 31st District

DAVE COGDILL
Assemblyman, 25th District

NICOLE PARRA
Assemblywoman, 30th District

BILL MAZE
Assemblyman, 34th District

TODD SPITZER
Assemblyman, 71st District

SIMÓN SALINAS
Assemblyman, 28th District

DOUG LA MALFA
Assemblyman, 2nd District

MERVYN DYMALLY
Assemblyman, 52nd District

PATTY BERG
Assemblywoman, 1st District

cc: Dan Dunmoyer, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Michael Genest, Director, Department of Finance
Ruben Grijalva, Director, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection